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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PTER](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: ANBAR PARLIAMENTARIANS OPPOSED TO ACCEPTANCE OF
CABINET POSITIONS BY ANBAR SHEIKHS

REF: BAGHDAD 3538

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Ellen Germain
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) This is a joint Anbar PRT/POL reporting cable.

Summary

[1](#)2. (C) Six of the nine Anbari members of the Council of Representatives (CoR), all members of parties in the (Sunni) Tawafuq bloc, told Poloffs during October 30 and 31 meetings that they do not believe Awakening Council of Iraq (SAI) leader Sheikh Ahmad Abu Risha will accept the offer from PM Maliki that he should propose candidates to fill ministerial positions vacated by Tawafuq, a statement that contradicts what Sheikh Ahmad told us, namely that the SAI will accept cabinet seats if Tawafuq does not rejoin Maliki's government (reftel). The Anbari CoR representatives said they are reaching out to Sheikh Ahmad, even while he is currently in the U.S., to lobby him against any decision to be represented in the Maliki government. They remain convinced that SAI will not break "Sunni unity" and join PM Maliki's government until he changes his policies and stops what they called "sectarian practices." The CoR members stressed their hope that the USG would "work mostly through the elected representatives of the Anbari people," stating that SAI is not part of the elected government. Finally, the CoR deputies expressed confidence that Tawafuq candidates will be successful in upcoming provincial elections in Anbar, but cautioned that Tawafuq's success will depend on the return of educated Anbaris who fled the country during the insurgency and are considered to be the backbone of their support in Anbar. End Summary.

CoR Members Predict SAI Will Not Join Maliki's Government

[1](#)3. (C) On October 30 and 31, Poloffs met with six of the nine Anbari CoR deputies at the Tawafuq party headquarters in the CoR building. (All nine Anbari CoR members belong to Tawafuq.) The six deputies - Sheikh Khalaf al-Dulaimi, Dr. Mustafa Mohammed Ali al-Hiti, Dr. Nadirah al-Ani, Dr. Salman al-Jumaili, Dr. Asma al-Duleimi, and Ahmad Sulayman al-Alwani - expressed confidence that Sheikh Ahmad Abu Risha and SAI would not break "Sunni unity" and join PM Maliki's government. Al-Hiti said he had been in touch with Sheikh Ahmad by telephone while Sheikh Ahmad is currently in the United States on an International Visitors Leadership (IVLP) program with other Anbari leaders.

[1](#)4. (C) "I just spoke with Sheikh Ahmad on the telephone in the U.S. I am confident that we can be allies with Sheikh Ahmad and he will not split the unity of the Sunni and the people in Anbar," al-Hiti said. "First, we believe that the SAI will not join Maliki's government until it changes its policies and is not sectarian. Second, we believe that

Sheikh Ahmad will not try to replace Tawafuq." Al-Hiti added: "Originally Sheikh Ahmad and SAI may have wanted to take positions in PM Maliki's government but I think they realized there is another partner for them, and that partner is Tawafuq." Asma al-Duleimi concurred with the group's assessment. "There is no division between Tawafuq and SAI in our eyes. I believe that Sheikh Ahmad is a good man. But we need experienced men who are educated, scientific, and cultured. So Sheikh Ahmad needs the help and support of Tawafuq because he is not as experienced," she said.

"There is More than Just One Tribe in Anbar"

15. (C) While stressing that they saw SAI as "an ally of Tawafuq," the Anbari CoR deputies argued that the SAI is not the "only tribal force in Anbar." Sheikh Khalaf al-Dulaimi noted the importance of other tribes that he said fought the insurgency in the last several years, including the Abu Mahal tribe in western Anbar, the Abu Issa tribe in the Fallujah area, and the Abu Fahad in the Euphrates River valley. "I have also gathered my people to fight al-Qaeda. Our people killed thirty terrorists at one point. But I had to stop because I had knee surgery" he said, lifting up his sheikh's robes to display his scars.

16. (C) "It is important for the American government to work with all the tribes and all the parties in Anbar, and not just the SAI," Nadira al-Ani agreed. "The nine of us in Parliament are the elected representatives of Anbar, and we hope that the American government will work first through us," she added. In recent weeks, two other Anbari CoR deputies, Asma al-Duleimi and Omar Abdulsattar, have expressed similar sentiments. During an October 7 "iftar"

BAGHDAD 00003622 002 OF 002

(meal breaking the fast during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan) hosted by Tawafuq leader Adnan al-Duleimi, Abdulsattar said that Anbar's "democratically elected representatives speak for the people of Anbar. People should work with us first."

Tawafuq Hopeful about Success in Anbar Elections

17. (C) The CoR deputies said that while they are hopeful Tawafuq candidates can be successful in upcoming provincial elections in Anbar, their success will depend on the return of educated Anbaris who fled the country due to the insurgency. "The doctors, lawyers, and engineers who fled Anbar for Damascus, Amman, and Baghdad during the fighting, these are the people who will support us," al-Hiti said. The deputies acknowledged low voter turnout in Anbar Province in earlier elections, but expressed confidence that Tawafuq candidates could prevail even with higher voter turnout. The deputies all stressed the importance of creating a mechanism for casting absentee ballots for Anbaris living outside the province. "If we have a process for absentee ballots, if the voting is fair, if we watch the voting boxes to make sure there is no cheating, then we will be successful," al-Ani added.

Comment

18. (C) Anbar's Tawafuq CoR members continue to cling to the hope that SAI will not break ranks and join PM Maliki's government in an effort to replace Tawafuq. Their claims that Tawafuq outreach convinced Sheikh Ahmad that "Tawafuq is a partner" of SAI will be tested in the coming days, influenced no doubt by what he hears and concludes this week in Washington. However, if Sheikh Ahmad and SAI do join Maliki, the Anbari Tawafuq CoR members warn that Maliki will have to accept the consequences of appointing people who have not been elected or held public office and who are incapable of representing broader (i.e., non Anbari) Sunni interests.

End Comment.
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